

## THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL STATUS OF TURKISH LOAN WORDS IN ALBANIAN

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**Abstract:** Albanian language consists of a considerable number of Turkish loan words with limited domains of usage. Purist efforts of the Albanian National Renaissance in the second half of the XIXth century and concepts of linguistic uniformity, especially in Albania, in the second half of the XXth century, have contributed to the exclusion of such loan words from certain styles and registers. The analyses of a list of Turkism's in the Dictionary of Standard Albanian proves that most of them are being used in informal, ironic, sometimes hyperbolic and evocative style, as well as in religious registers associated with Islam, having no neutral and formal style use. The present study aims at treating the reasons for such limitations in the usage of Turkish loan words in the Albanian language and offers a description of their conventional domains.

**Keywords:** Turcisms, Lexis, Style, Register, Purism, Domain

### TÜRKÇE ÖDÜNÇLEMELERİN ARNAVUT DİLİNDEKİ KONUMU

**ÖZ:** Arnavut dilinde sınırlı kullanım alanına sahip bir kısım Türkçe ödünçlemeler bulunmaktadır. XIX. yüzyılın ikinci yarısındaki Arnavut Ulusal Rönesans'ı özleştirmecilerinin çabaları ve özellikle Arnavutluk'ta XX. yüzyılda beliren tekdüze dil kavramları bu tür kelimelerin bazı biçem ve kesitler ile sınırlanmasına yol açtı. Standart Arnavut Dili Sözlüğünde bulunan bazı Türkçe verilerin analizi, bunların çoğunun gayriresmî, ironik, bazen abartılı ve çağırışmıcı biçemlerde kullanıldığını gösteriyor. Aynı zamanda İslam dini üslubunda, nötr ve resmî biçem kullanımı göstermeden kullanıldığı da görülmektedir. Çalışmamız, Arnavutçadaki Türkçe ödünçlemelerin bu tür sınırlandırılmalarının nedenlerini ele almakla birlikte yaygın olan kullanım alanlarını da açıklayacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ödünçlemeler, Düzlem, Biçem, Kesit Dil, Özleştirmecilik, Alan

The aim of this article is to discuss the status of Turkish loanwords in the Albanian language, while observing the linguistic function of the latter and their application in different linguistic fields in the Albanian language. The term status refers to the status of a lexical unit and it stands for different usages of that particular unit in various registers and styles. Consequently, formal and written usages are considered to have a higher status when

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compared with informal and other variants that cannot be found in written language.

The issue of Turkish loanwords in the Albanian language has been dealt with through several points of view. Gustav Meyer<sup>1</sup> in his etymologic dictionary lists over 5000 Turkish loanwords in Albanian, Çabej<sup>2</sup> presented a chronology of the way Turkish loanwords have become an integral part of the Albanian language, whereas Boretzky<sup>3</sup> presented a detailed report on Turkish loanwords and their layering within the Albanian language. Jashar-Nasteva<sup>4</sup> treats the above-mentioned issue indirectly, when discussing the Turkish loanwords in Macedonian, the same as Friedman<sup>5</sup>. From a more prescriptive perspective, Turkish loanwords in Albanian have been discussed by Kostallari<sup>6</sup>, Mulaku<sup>7</sup>, and Mehdiu<sup>8</sup>. Latifi-Xhanari<sup>9</sup> has presented a study on Turkish loanwords and their semantics in the Albanian dictionary, by leaving out a number of words that are in use, but not listed in the dictionaries of different time periods. Dizdari<sup>10</sup> has presented a dictionary of Orientalisms, including words that have made their way into Albanian through Turkish, even when they are borrowings in Turkish, too: namely, Arabic and Persian words.

Turkish and Albanian have been in direct contact since the end of the XIV century, while until the beginning of the XX century Turkish had been

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Meyer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Albanesischen Sprache*. Strasbourg: Trübner, 1891, p. 1- 489.

<sup>2</sup> Eqrem Çabej, "Për një shtresim kronologjik të huazimeve turke". In: *Studime Filologjike nr.4*, Tiranë, 1975, p. 80-86.

<sup>3</sup> Norbert Boretzky, *Der Türkische einfluss auf das Albanische*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975, Teil 2.

<sup>4</sup> Olivera Jašar-Nasteva, *Turski leksički elementi vo makedonskiot jazik*. Skopje: Institute for the Macedonian Language, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Victor Friedman, *Turkish in Macedonia and Beyond: Studies in Contact, Typology, and Other Phenomena in the Balkans and the Caucasus*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003; V. Friedman, "From Orientalism to Democracy and Back Again", In: *Developing Cultural Identity in the Balkans*, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter King, 2005; V. Friedman, *Macedonian Studies 2*. Skopje: MASA, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Androkli Kostallari, „Rreth depërtimit të turqizimeve në gjuhën shqipe gjatë shekujve XVII-XVIII”. In: *Gjurmime albanologjike*. Prishtinë: SSHF, 1978, p. 37-51.

<sup>7</sup> Latif Mulaku, "Turqizmat në gjuhën shqipe". In: *Seminari i Kulturës Shqiptare për të Huaj III*. Prishtinë: UP, 1977, p. 55-62.

<sup>8</sup> Feti Mehdiu, "Orientalizmat: hyrja dhe përdorimi i tyre në gjuhën shqipe". In: *Studime mbi leksikun dhe mbi formimin e fjalëve në gjuhën shqipe*. Tiranë: Instituti i Gjuhësisë, 1989, p. 407-411.

<sup>9</sup> Lindita Latifi-Xhanari, *Turqizmat dhe semantika e tyre në fjalorët e shqipes*. Tiranë: Dudaj, 2012, p. 189-298.

<sup>10</sup> Tahir Dizdari, *Fjalor i orientalizmeve*. Tiranë: AITCC, 2005.

an official administrative language in Albanian populated territories. Albanian at that time, used to have more of a domestic usage rather than an official one<sup>11</sup>. After the departure of the Ottoman Empire, there was a declaration of independence for the Albanian state (1913), but some of Albanian territories remained under the rule of several other countries (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece). It was at this time that the respective statuses of Albanian and Turkish shifted and the replaceability between the two languages has been reported by Beci<sup>12</sup>, Ismajli<sup>13</sup>, Rugova<sup>14</sup>.

The purist ideas of the Albanian National renaissance of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century have revealed proposals to replace Turkish words and other borrowings with native Albanian words. However, the Albanian dictionary of today (1980) still includes thousands of Turkish loanwords.

The standardization of the Albanian language (1972) has been followed by the utilization of a number of mechanisms in Albania to impose the standardized version in all spheres of language use.<sup>15</sup> Among them, the journal 'Gjuha jonë' has conducted a project titled "Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj" (Albanian words instead of a foreign one), a lexical project in which certain highly esteemed institutions of the time proposed the usage of Albanian words instead of borrowed ones, with emphasis on Turkish loan words:

*"The editorial staff of the journal invites all its readers not only to start using the Albanian words and expressions that were being published, but to play an active role in proposing new words, which would enrich the Albanian dictionary"*<sup>16</sup>.

Rugova & Sejdiu - Rugova<sup>17</sup> have argued that such a project was influenced by the linguistic concept stating that languages are homogeneous,

<sup>11</sup> Bardh Rugova, „Pozita dhe statusi i shqipes kundruall gjuhëve të tjera të Ballkanit“. In: *Shqipja dhe gjuhët e Ballkanit*, Prishtinë: ASHAK, 2012, p. 163-173.

<sup>12</sup> Bahri Beci, *Probleme të lidhjeve të shqipes me gjuhët e tjera ballkanike*. Pejë: Dukagjini, 2002, p. 18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Rexhep Ismajli, *Standarde dhe identitete*. Pejë: Dukagjini, 2003, p. 202-205.

<sup>14</sup> B. Rugova, *ibid.*, p. 163-173.

<sup>15</sup> R. Ismajli, *ibid.*, p. 17-75; Shkumbin Munishi, „Barazia e gjuhëve në Kosovë dhe perspektiva evropiane“. In: *1 Balkanlarda Tarih ve Kültür Kongresi*, Sakarya: Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2009, p. 989-1012.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in the foreword of the project, extracted from the journal "Gjuha jonë", published in year 2000, retrieved from [http://www.shkenca.org/pdf/gjuhe/fjala\\_shqipe.pdf](http://www.shkenca.org/pdf/gjuhe/fjala_shqipe.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Lindita Sejdiu & Bardh Rugova, „The ideology of "people's language" in the development of standard Albanian language“, In: *Sprache und Kultur der Albaner*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015, p. 618-633.

and that there are no styles, or registers, and as a result no different linguistic functions.

As an illustration, one of the proposals made by the journal is that the word ‘aksham’ should be exempted from the Albanian dictionary and replaced by the word ‘muzgu’. Although the word ‘muzgu’ does replace the concept of ‘aksham’ (eng. nightfall, evening) as a specific time of the day, ‘muzgu’ does not replace the notion of the timeframe meant for praying in Islam. Neither does it replace the notion established by different stylistic features in oriental literature, nor the ironic style of its use.

Therefore, the present article will treat the status and the function of the Turkish loanwords in Albanian by taking into consideration the “exempted” units of the lexical project “Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj”. Latifi-Xhanari<sup>18</sup> have presented a broad list of Turkish loan words classified based on different fields of use and the list shows that these words have mostly informal function. For illustration purposes, the word ‘damlla’ (eng. stroke) has been used in Albanian as well as in Macedonian. However, while in Macedonian the expression ‘*Damlaisan sam*’ - “*I have been stroken*” (*Më ka rënë damlla* in Albanian) denotes a formal usage and has a direct textual meaning, the Albanian version of the word ‘damlla’ is characteristic of informal situations and is often used figuratively – meaning: I am unpleasantly surprised - therefore offering a variable which has an expressive function. In military and administrative terminology, they constitute an outdated, ironic and figurative layer of language use. In domestic and religious terminology they are more consistent. In educational and professional terminology, they have only expressive (hence figurative) functions. They are un-noticed in the scientific and technological sphere.

In this article, the lexis of exempted Turkish loanwords in the project “Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj” will be compared to lexis of Turkish loanwords that are not part of normative Albanian dictionary even though they are used among Albanian speakers in different communication settings. This lexis has been mapped in listing words taken from different media and publishing houses in Kosovo and Albania. These words will later on undergo a layering process in different communication settings. For research purposes, only words beginning with the letters *a* and *b* have been chosen to be analyzed. The theoretical mechanism will rely on the classification of different linguistic varieties according to Werlich<sup>19</sup> and Rugova & Sejdiu-

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<sup>18</sup> L. Latifi-Xhanari, *ibid.*, p. 189-298.

<sup>19</sup> Egon Werlich, *A Text Grammar of English*. Stuttgart: Quelle und Meyer, 1983, p. 39-98.

Rugova<sup>20</sup>. In this regard, styles and linguistic registers will be identified, whereas the style shall be considered as a 'free variety, with register being considered a 'mandatory linguistic variety'.

These varieties will be divided in terms of the following main criteria<sup>21</sup>: the first criterion is the selection of the sender to assess the relationship between the latter and the receiver/s, therefore establishing a number of differences between formal and informal styles. Formal styles will display a distance between the sender and the receiver, whereas informal styles will display a proximity that could be an ordinary and intimate one.

The second criterion is the classification according to the functions of the language: different informative-oriented styles (technical and illustrative-comparative ones), and expressive oriented styles: instructive style. Within the directive function, texts can be divided into evocative, appreciatory, depreciatory and convincing.

The expressive-oriented styles will be classified into ironic, hyperbolic and metaphorical ones. The three cases will be subject to the hypernymic notion of figure, and are part of the text effectivity, as a regulative principle of textuality.

The total of 16 Turkish loanwords (within the words that start with a and b in the dictionary) have been identified and have been proposed to be exempted from the Albanian dictionary in the project "Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj": açık (eng. clear, open), adash (eng. namesake), aferim (eng. well done), akçi (eng. coin), aksham (eng. evening), alet (eng. device), aman (eng. pardon, please), avash (eng. slow), bajagi (eng. pretty much), belqim (eng. maybe), berberhane (eng. barbershop), bina (eng. building), birinxhi (eng. first), boll (ëk) (eng. abundance, plenitude), bosh (llëk) (eng. emptiness), bujrum (eng. welcome).

In the lexis of words that have not been included in the Albanian dictionary but are being used in written texts of newspapers and publishing houses in Kosovo and Albania, a total of 1212 words that start with A have been identified. However, only 14 of them are borrowings from Turkish: abej (eng. elder brother), açukash (eng. hide-and-see), adeta (eng. fairly, so to say), ahret (eng. afterlife), ajvar (eng. type of relish made from red peppers), akllëk (eng. whiteness), aligjyn (eng. Elijah's day, desert made on the occasion of this day), all (eng. red), allah-allah (eng. Gosh!), allahile (eng. for heaven's sake), allapaçë (eng. babler, talky), atki (eng. scarf).

<sup>20</sup> B. Rugova & L. Sejdiu-Rugova, *Hyrje në gramatikën e tekstit të gjuhës shqipe*. Prishtinë: Trembelat, 2015, p. 49-99.

<sup>21</sup> B. Rugova & L. Sejdiu-Rugova, *ibid*, p. 49-99.

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Other Turkish loanwords extracted from the above-mentioned draft-dictionary include: *eksiq* (eng. missing), *filan* (eng. such a one), *kallaballëk* (eng. crowd), *karshi* (eng. in front of), *komshi* (eng. neighbor), *okllagi* (eng. roller). This number of words constitutes less than one percent of the entire word group. All of these words have an informal usage, and belong to different social, domestic and religious spheres of language use. This small number of Turkish loan words in the lists of the words absent from the dictionary shows that the dynamics of Albanian language development have more to do with the borrowings from other languages and spheres of technological and scientific advancements. None of the terms coming from these fields constitutes a Turkish loanword. However, let's analyze the usage fields of some of the words classified as 'exempted'.

	Formal	
	Informal	Açık
Informative	Technical	
	Illustrative-Constructive	
Directive	Evocative	Açık
	Appreciatory	
	Depreciatory	Açık
	Convincing	
Expressive	Ironic	Açık
	Hyperbolic	
	Metaphoric	

**Table 1** The usage field of loanword "Açık" (eng. clear, open)

	Formal	Adash
	Informal	Adash
Informative	Technical	Adash
	Illustrative-Contrastive	Adash
Directive	Evocative	
	Appreciatory	Adash
	Depreciatory	
	Convincing	
Expressive	Ironic	
	Hyperbolic	
	Metaphoric	

**Table 2** The usage field of loanword “Adash” (eng. namesake)

	Formal	
	Informal	Aman
Informative	Technical	
	Illustrative-Contrastive	
Directive	Evocative	Aman
	Appreciatory	
	Depreciatory	Aman
	Convincing	Aman
Expressive	Ironic	Aman
	Hyperbolic	
	Metaphoric	

**Table 3** The usage field of loanword “Aman” (eng. please, pardon)

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	Formal	
	Informal	Aksham
Informative	Technical	Aksham
	Illustrative-Contrastive	
Directive	Evocative	Aksham
	Appreciatory	
	Depreciatory	Aksham
	Convincing	
Expressive	Ironic	
	Hyperbolic	
	Metaphoric	

**Table 4** The usage field of loanword “Aksham” (eng. evening, nightfall)

Only three out of 16 words (starting with A and B) from the lexical project “Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj” have displayed a formal usage (adash, bollëk, boshllëk), whereas the remaining words mostly display an ironical, evocative and depreciatory styles, towards the expressive and directive functions. From the non-included words, only two (ajvar, alef) belong to the formal style. The rest are also oriented towards an informal style but not in its directive and expressive variables. Words such as: abej, açukash (eng. regional, a children’s game) adeta, ajvar, akllëk, all, allahile, allapaçë, atki - belong to the social and domestic field of usage. They are irreplaceable in their domain of usage.

### Conclusions

Turkish loanwords in Albanian have a vast usage in informal style and for expressive and directive functions.

In the military and administrative terminology, they constitute an outdated, ironic and figurative layer of language use. In domestic and religious terminology, they are more consistent. In educational and professional denominations, they have only expressive (figurative) functions. They are un-noticed in the scientific and technological sphere.

However, they are present in everyday Albanian, mostly in social and domestic spheres of usage. This comes to show that the usage of Turkish loanwords in the Albanian language continues to be consistent, but their status has decayed from formal use to an informal one and it’s mainly

oriented not towards its informative functions but towards its directive and expressive functions.

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